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ABSTRACT

This catalog deals with an exhibition of historical reading materials used in the United States--old primers, spellers, and readers--which contained mostly items from privately owned collections. The catalog is divided into the following chronological sections: (1) Following in the Footsteps of Our English Forebears: The Alphabet Method Reigns Supreme (1640-1826); (2) The Great Period of Experimentation in Introductory Reading Instruction (1826-1883); (3) Literature First: Sentence and Story Methods (1883-1925); and (4) The Influence of Scientific Investigations into Reading (1914-1940). (Contains a 45-item list of resources for further reading.) (NKA)

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Writing the Past:

Teaching Reading in Colonial America and the United States 1640–1940

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An Exhibition

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Writing the Past:
Teaching Reading in Colonial America and the United States
1640–1940

THE CATALOG

by

E. Jennifer Monaghan and Arlene L. Barry

with grateful thanks to Vincent Faraone,
whose catalogue for the last exhibition of
beginning reading materials
at an International Reading Association convention
provided the structure, some of the wording,
and the inspiration for our own.

**Exhibition presented at the 44th Annual Convention of
the International Reading Association
San Diego, California
May 2–7, 1999**

**sponsored by the
History of Reading Special Interest Group
of the International Reading Association**

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the International Reading Association and especially Kathryn Ransom, IRA President, for their interest in the history of literacy, for printing the catalog, and for their assistance in mounting this exhibition.

A Note on the Origin of This Exhibition

In the spring of 1986, Vincent Faraone, with the help of H. Alan Robinson, both of Hofstra University, organized an exhibition of old primers, spellers and readers at the 31st International Reading Association convention in Philadelphia. The exhibited books were selected from the Nila Banton Smith Historical Collection in Reading at Hofstra University. Dr. Faraone wrote the accompanying catalogue, *Teaching the ABC's in America, 1647–1934*. We have drawn upon his work, with his permission, for the following catalogue.

Provenance of Items in the Exhibition

Materials for the current exhibition at the 44th Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, San Diego, have come from privately owned collections. Several items were loaned by Allen Berger, Miami University, Ohio; the remaining items by Charles Monaghan of Brooklyn and E. Jennifer Monaghan, Brooklyn College of The City University of New York.

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Preface

In 1647 the General Court of Massachusetts enacted a law to protect the children of the colony from the snares of the devil. This "Ould Deluder" law, as it came to be known, read as follows:

> It being one cheife project of that ould deluder, Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknowne tongue, so in these latter times, by perswading from the use of tongues, that so at least the true sence & meaning of the originall might be clouded by false glosses of saint seeming deceivers, that learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in the church & commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors,
>
> It is therefore ordered, that every towneship in this iurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of 50 householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their towne to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write & reade, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in generall...

This law served, in part, as a catalyst for the development of materials and instructional methods to teach children to read. Some of these early literacy materials are the focus of this exhibit.

The brief chronological overview below presents only a sample of the methods and materials of reading instruction from the 1640s to 1940. In addition, it presents only materials in English. We were not able to include texts in other languages, such as the Massachusett Native American tongue, nor German or Hebrew texts for reading instruction. Nor have we made many comments on how methods and content have been affected by the fact that textbooks are creatures of the commercial marketplace, in fierce competition with one another.

The exhibition is divided into four main time periods, but there is naturally some overlap between them.

I.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ENGLISH FOREBEARS: THE ALPHABET METHOD REIGNS SUPREME (1640–1826)

Introduction

The books we give to children to help them learn to read have always represented, and still do represent our cultural, ethical, and/or religious values. Reading textbooks, in particular, offer a window onto the prevailing value and belief systems of the period in which they are written.

In New England in the 17th century, those values were Christian, Protestant, and Puritan. There was a standard sequence of reading texts throughout the colonies. The colonial child began with the hornbook and then moved into a primer. After completing the primer, he or she would read the psalter (book of psalms), New Testament, and then the entire Bible. The Bible was considered the apex of the reading curriculum, at which all the earlier texts aimed.

The Alphabet Method

For a very long time in American reading instruction, "reading" meant oral reading. This is the presupposition for all the texts below until the silent reading movement of the early 20th century. It was because children were spelling and reading aloud that reading instruction was offered to children as young as three, long before they were taught to hold a quill pen and write, around the age of seven.

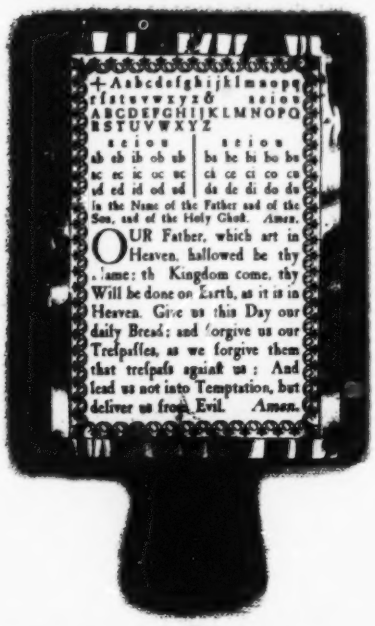
In the alphabet method, children first identified the letters by name, then spelled aloud the (mostly nonsense) syllables in the syllabary: *"Ay, bee, Ab; ee bee, eb; eye bee, ib."* Next they spelled out words, beginning with one syllable and progressing up to eight syllables. "Tables" of syllables were interspersed with "lessons" of connected reading material that consisted only of the number of syllables reached by that point. Difficulty was equated with length: longer

words were considered harder words. A "set for diversity," as we would call it today, for vowel pronunciation was implicit, as children learned short vowels in their ab eb ibs and long in their ba be bis.

The alphabet method was used without any rivals until about 1820, and even after that it persisted in the United States alongside whole word and phonic methods until about 1870.

Hornbooks

The hornbook was for centuries a child's first introduction to reading. *The Nuremberg Chronicle*, published in 1493, shows St. Cecilia holding one. Hornbooks were imported into the colonies early in the American experience, and there are advertisements for them as late as 1772. But they apparently were never manufactured here.


+ A a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
r ſ s t u v w x y z & a e i o u
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z
a e i o u
ab eb ib ob ub
ac ec ic oc uc
ad ed id od ud
In the Name of the Father and of the
Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Amen.
OUR Father, which art in
Heaven, hallowed be thy
Name: th Kingdom come, thy
Will be done on Earth, as it is in
Heaven. Give us this Day our
daily Bread; and forgive us our
Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them
that treſpaſs againſt us: And
lead us not into Temptation, but
deliver us from Evil. Amen.

Catalog No.1

1. HORNBOOK. (Modern reproduction)

Really not a book at all, the hornbook usually consisted of a single sheet of paper containing the alphabet in upper and lower case letters, a shortened syllabary, the invocation, and the Lord's Prayer. It was therefore the child's first introduction to Christianity.

Hornbooks were at times made of wood, iron, pewter, ivory, silver (or even gingerbread) and covered with a sheet of translucent horn. In the colonies, imported hornbooks were advertised as "gilt or plain."

The *ab eb ib ob ub* and *ba be bi bo bu* near the top of the page of the hornbook were the beginning of the syllabary, which was such an integral part of the alphabet method.

Battledores

By about the middle of the 18th century, the hornbook had evolved into a version known as a "battledore," which was sold alongside the traditional hornbook. Made of cardboard folded into three, the battledore reveals a distinct shift toward the secular. The alphabet illustrations (*A Ape, B Bucket, C Cannon*) should be compared with those of the primer.

2. **BATTLEDORE: *First Lessons for Children To Instruct and Amuse* (facsimile), n.d. [c. 1800?].**

Primers

The mainstay of colonial primary education was the primer. This book was called a primer (a word that originally meant a book of prayers) because it was thought to contain the primary essentials for one's spiritual existence. Unlike the hornbook and battledore, the primer was a true book (some were more than 70 pages) and a comprehensive text. Primers imported into the colonies are documented as early as 1655 in New England. The first truly American primer, printed on an American press and designed for the American market, was the *New-England Primer*, published shortly before 1690. The oldest extant edition is dated 1727.

Although sizes and shapes of primers differed, they were generally very small books. The standard size of the *New-England Primer* was 2½ x 4 inches. This very small size was probably the result of an attempt to save paper (which had to be imported from England through most of the 17th century) rather than to accommodate tiny hands.

Like that of the hornbook, the content of the primer was Christian in character. Unlike the hornbook, the *New-England Primer* reflected the beliefs of the Congregationalists, better known as Puritans, who first arrived inMassachusetts in large numbers in the 1630s to escape religious persecution in England.

Compare the following three examples of the *New-England Primer*. The first is Paul Leicester Ford's reproduction of the earliest extant edition of 1727; the second is a modern reproduction of an original dated between 1785 to 1790; the third is an undated original that is inscribed 1893 on the flyleaf.

3. **THE NEW-ENGLAND PRIMER. Boston: S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1727. Reproduced in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The New-England Primer* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1909).**

Some of the themes in the alphabet verses of the *New-England Primer* reflect the doctrines of original sin: "A: In Adam's Fall/We sinned all" (note the f-shaped s, known as the "long s," used in the middle of words); the hope of salvation provided by the Bible: "B: Thy Life to Mend/This Book attend"; and the joy that reading godly books can inspire: "H: My Book and Heart/Shall never part."

Catalog No. 3

These alphabet verses appeared in all versions of the primer, although a few of the verses were changed to suit the prevailing political moment. They were later joined by a much more secular alphabet: A Apple, B Bull, C Cat.

4. **THE NEW-ENGLAND PRIMER. Boston: B. Larkin, n.d. [1785–1790?]. (Modern reproduction)**

5. **THE NEW-ENGLAND PRIMER. Boston: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, n.d. [1893?].**

Common to all these editions of the *New-England Primer* was the poem attributed to the Protestant martyr John Rogers (with its accompanying woodcut). A few days before he was burned to death at the stake by the Catholic Queen Mary in February 1554, he composed a poem for his family. The importance of the printed word is implicit in its first verse:

GIVE Ear my Children to my Words
whom God hath dearly bought,
Lay up his Laws within your Heart,
and print them in your thought.

Spelling Books

Spelling books, known colloquially as "spellers," were in use in England by the late 1500s but were first introduced into the colonies in quantity at the turn of the 18th century. They were therefore relative newcomers to the field of education when compared to the time-honored status of hornbooks and primers. They were also, in a sense, misnamed since their instructional objective was to teach not only spelling but reading, religion, and morality. Like the primers, they were also comprehensive texts. Spellers were larger in size, however, measuring approximately 4 x 6 ½ inches and sometimes containing as many as 100 pages. The format of the speller alternated between "tables" (lists of words in an increasing number of syllables) and "lessons" (sentences or reading selections). Some spellers contained a great deal of secular reading material.

In the absence of any international copyright legislation, English spellers such as those by Thomas Dyche, Henry Dixon (in a compilation), and Thomas Dilworth were reproduced freely on American presses from 1730 on. By this time the alphabet approach had evolved enough for the authors of spellers to make fine distinctions about the placement of primary syllabic stress: they presented tables of "words of two syllables, accented on the first," then "words of two syllables, accented on the second," and so forth.

No. V.

1ſt or long *a*	1ſt or long *e*	3d or broad *a*	1ſt or long *o*
a hate	e here	a hall	o go
ai fair	ee meet	au cauſe	ow blow
ay day	ea heal	aw law	oe foe
ey they	ie field	oa groat	ou four
ei vein	ei deceive	ou ought	oo door
au gauge	i machine	o gone	oa groan

1ſt or long *u*	2d or ſhort *u*	*oo* long	*oo* ſhort
u cube	u bud	oo room	oo root
eu feud	oo blood	o move	o wolf
ew new	ou tough	ou tour	ou would
ue true	o dove	y liquid	u buſh
ieu lieu	i bird	y your	
eau beauty	e her	i million	
iew view			
ui fruit			

Here we obſerve the ſame ſound often expreſſed in ſix, ſeven, or eight different ways.

Conſonants.

C has 2 ſounds
- k as in caſe
- s cellar

F is repreſented by 2 other combinations of letters
- ph Philip
- gh laugh

G has 2 ſounds
- hard go
- ſoft gentle

J has the ſame ſound as ſoft g joy

S has 2 ſounds
- s this
- z riſe

X has 3 ſounds
- gz example
- ks wax
- z Xenophon

Th has 2 ſounds
- ſoft think
- hard thou

Ch has 3 ſounds
- ch as haſe
- ſh chaiſe
- k chorus

Ti and ci ſound like ſh
- nation
- vicious

Catalog No. 6

Until the Declaration of Independence in 1776, all spellers printed in the colonies had been reprints of imported British works. The war for American independence made British texts much less acceptable, at least at first. Except for a little spelling book composed by the anti-slavery activist Anthony Benezet in Philadelphia in 1779, the first speller written by an American and published on an American press was the work of a young and ardently patriot-

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ic Noah Webster—the future lexicographer—whose studies at Yale College had been interrupted by the American Revolution.

6. **WEBSTER, NOAH. *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language... Part I.* Hartford, CT: Hudson & Goodwin, for the author, 1783. (Modern reproduction)**

Calling his little book "a mite [thrown] into the common treasure of patriotic exertions" (p. 14), Webster spent his own money to pay for the publication of his speller, the first part of his *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, in 1783. (The second part was a grammar; the third, a reader.) He claimed that he would teach the country a uniform system of pronunciation that would serve to unify the new nation, and he used numerical superscripts to indicate different vowel pronunciations.

7. **WEBSTER, NOAH. *The American Spelling Book*. Boston: West and Richardson, 1817.**

Criticized for deferring all reading matter until p. 101 and for the speller's cumbersome title, Webster revised the speller and reissued it in 1787 under its new title, *The American Spelling Book*. This 1817 edition from Boston is open at its first reading lesson, "NO man may put off the law of God," which now appears on p. 43. It was famous among children as their first experience of real reading: To achieve it, reminisced one man, was to stand on "the hill-top of human greatness."

Webster's *American Spelling Book* was the undisputed best seller of introductory reading textbooks in the United States until the 1820s, when it was beginning to look old-fashioned. In 1829, a year after he had published his famous dictionary, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, Webster completely revised his speller. (He and his family had lived off the income from its sales during the 30 or so years he was writing his dictionary). For the first time, he sought someone else's help. A New York teacher named Aaron Ely wrote substantial parts of the speller but died before the work was in print.

Now called *The Elementary Spelling Book* (but soon dubbed the "Blue-back speller" because of its familiar blue covers) and promoted vigorously by

Webster, the new version was soon another success. Webster incorporated the spelling changes that distinguish American from British spellings to this day, such as center rather than centre; honor instead of honour. Another important feature was a diacritical marking system to indicate pronunciation. But instead of the connected readings of the old spellers, the *Elementary* provided pithy sentences unrelated to each other:

Brass is made of zinc and copper.
The rain will make the grass grow.

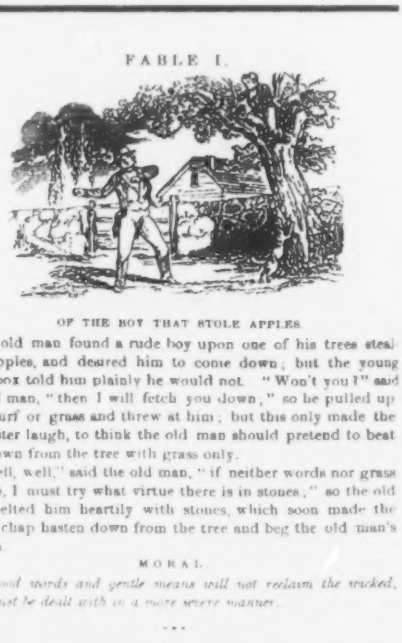
One nugget remembered fondly by many in later life was

A tiger will kill and eat a man.

Not many years after Webster died in 1843, the blue-back speller was being printed at the rate of a million copies a year. Total sales of the spellers in all their versions easily reached 70 million. By this time, however, the blue-back was being used as a spelling book in the modern sense and was the authority in the spelling bees so popular in rural areas.

8. WEBSTER, NOAH. *The Elementary Spelling Book*, rev. ed. New York: D. Appleton, 1857.

In 1857, William Webster, Noah Webster's only son, revised his father's speller in order to make its pronunciation key conform to a recently revised edition of Webster's dictionary. This system of diacritical markings was used extensively by others. Indeed, it was Noah Webster who popularized the breve and the macron to indicate short and long vowels, respectively.



FABLE I.

OF THE BOY THAT STOLE APPLES.

An old man found a rude boy upon one of his trees stealing apples, and desired him to come down; but the young saucebox told him plainly he would not. "Won't you?" said the old man, "then I will fetch you down," so he pulled up some turf or grass and threw at him; but this only made the youngster laugh, to think the old man should pretend to beat him down from the tree with grass only.

"Well, well," said the old man, "if neither words nor grass will do, I must try what virtue there is in stones;" so the old man pelted him heartily with stones, which soon made the young chap hasten down from the tree and beg the old man's pardon.

MORAL.

If good words and gentle means will not reclaim the wicked, they must be dealt with in a more severe manner.

* * *

Catalog No. 9

9. WEBSTER, NOAH. *The Elementary Spelling Book*, New York: American Book Company, [post 1908].

By 1908, Webster's speller had been published for almost seven decades. Yet every user of every edition could be sure that any individual exercise would

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appear on the page with the same number. The climax of Webster's tables, "Words of eight syllables, accented on the sixth," always appeared on p. 113. There were only two of these octosyllabic words, and their meaning seems appropriate to their difficulty:

un in tel li gi **bil** i ty in com pre hen si **bil** i ty

The fables that bring the book to a close were old favorites. The fable "Of the Boy That Stole Apples: has the moral that it is permissable to resort to physical punishment if verbal persuasion doesn't do the trick (pp. 140–141). It had first appeared in the *American Spelling Book* of 1787.

10. EMERSON, B.D. *The National-Spelling Book, and Pronouncing Tutor*. Boston: Richardson & Lord, 1828.

Spelling books continued their role as introductions to reading for many years, focusing their efforts on what we would now call decoding. Emerson used the British lexicographer John Walker's numbering system to indicate the pronunciation of vowels. He included a standard feature of spellers, homophones: Bare, naked/Bear, to suffer (p. 117).

11. EMERSON, B.D. *The New National-Spelling Book, and Pronouncing Tutor*. Claremont, NH: Claremont Manufacturing Co., 1833.

Only five years later, Emerson has introduced reading selections after his tables. This imprint is stereotyped, a new technique of printing that would be a boon to textbooks.

Readers: Old Style

In these early years, then, it was the speller that introduced a child to reading. A schoolbook called a "reader" was, until the 1830s, a book designed for children who could already read. Readers such as those by Noah Webster (the third part of his Grammatical Institute, published in 1785) or by Caleb Bingham consisted of a compilation of essays originally written for adults on a variety of subjects.

12. WEBSTER, NOAH. *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking....Being the Third Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language*. Hartford, CT: Hudson & Goodwin, n.d. [1799?].

The owner of this book, Samuel Pettengill, whose name is signed on the flyleaf, apparently found Webster's selection of lessons so boring that on this and subsequent pages he pasted in, with exquisite care, columns of "The Detective's Story" by Charles Dickens for a surreptitious better read! (pp. 12–13).

13. MURRAY, LINDLEY. The *English Reader*. Bellows Falls, VT, 1823.

The most widely used of these readers in the young United States was, ironically, one titled the *English Reader*. It was written by Lindley Murray, an American-born Quaker who had gone into exile in York, England, after his merchant New York family were branded as loyalists after the Revolutionary War. Murray's *English Reader*, first published in the United States in 1799, contained not a single work, prose or poetry, by an American author. It did, however, reflect Enlightenment ideas of liberty and equality that were easily accepted in the United States. Abraham Lincoln called the *English Reader* "the best schoolbook ever put in the hands of an American youth."

Aided by the fact that there were no royalties to pay in the United States, in the continuing absence of international copyright protection, Murray's reader became a best-seller, with some six million copies sold by 1850, and Murray himself became the largest-selling author of literacy textbooks in the first four decades of the 19th century.

14. THE VILLAGE READER. Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam, 1845.

The stories of *The Village Reader* are deeply moralistic or informational. A selection titled "The Blind Boy" clearly expects children to be able to understand similes and metaphors: "Though poverty lay like a dark mist on his prospects, and sometimes pressed heavily on his heart, yet the hardy and pious farmer toiled patiently along the thorny path he found marked out for him" (p. 94).

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II.

THE GREAT PERIOD OF EXPERIMENTATION IN INTRODUCTORY READING INSTRUCTION (1826–1883)

A Focus on Meaning

In the 1820s, educators in the United States began to look at the work of European educational reformers such as Rousseau and Pestalozzi, who had stressed the importance of meaning for the child. As they examined contemporary education, American educators interested in reading instruction, such as Henry Barnard and Horace Mann, felt that its chief weakness was the meaninglessness, from the child's perspective, of so many of the texts. They published their criticisms in the *American Journal of Education*, a Boston publication begun in 1826. Their approach caused a reexamination of children's textbooks and methods of instruction whose effects are still felt today.

The old spelling books, with their long lists of often incomprehensible words, now came under tremendous criticism, as did the ponderous and multisyllabic selections of essays in readers. Reformers attacked both Webster's spellers and Murray's readers. In response, educators created a series of books, also called "readers," that attempted to grade material according to its difficulty and offer stories that would be intelligible and interesting to children. Some of them also introduced the word method (see below), arguing along Pestalozzian principles that children learned from whole to part, not the other way around.

The first text to exhibit the influence of Pestalozzian ideas was Samuel Worcester's *Primer of the English Language* (1826). It has been called "perhaps the most innovative text in the history of American readers" (Venezky, 1987, p. 253). Unlike any earlier text, it included a wealth of instructions to the teacher, introduced prereading activities, and suggested that teachers teach words as wholes before proceeding to analyze them.

Readers: New Style

The genre of new readers that soon emerged is best known today from the Eclectic series of William Holmes McGuffey (1836 on). McGuffey drew liberally upon Worcester's pioneering reading series (1826–32)—so liberally, in fact, that Worcester's publishers sued McGuffey and his publisher for plagiarism and won an out of court settlement of $2,000.

15. **McGUFFEY, W[ILLIAM] H[OLMES]. *The Eclectic Second Reader.* Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1837. Reproduced in John H. Westerhoff III, *McGuffey and His Readers: Piety, Morality, and Education in Nineteenth-Century America.***

The theological element is very strong in the first edition. The second reader of 1837 is one of the earliest to include comprehension questions. In "Praise to God," (p. 25), the questions after the selection ask for more than factual answers. In this early edition, words in the stories (syllabified by hyphens) are presented *after* the reading selection. Later editions, however, put them before.

The connection between McGuffey and the series was soon lost, because McGuffey left his presidency of the University of Ohio abruptly in 1843, becoming professor of moral philosophy at the University of Virginia two years later. Smith continued the series, revising it constantly and promoting it with consummate skill. It became the most popular reading series of the middle third of the 19th century, with total sales estimated at 120 million. Until the major revision of 1879, it presupposed the use of the alphabet method.

16. **[McGUFFEY, WILLIAM H.] *McGuffey's Newly Revised Eclectic Spelling Book.* Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith, 1846.**

By 1846 Smith had taken over from the original firm of Truman & Smith. McGuffey's name is used in the title, but he is not credited as the author. The adoption of Webster's spelling changes by this important series was crucial to their wide public acceptance.

17. **McGUFFEY, WILLIAM H. *McGuffey's Newly Revised Eclectic Fourth Reader.* New York: Clark, Austin & Smith, 1849.**

"The reading exercises are selected from the best compositions of the model writers in our language," declared the publishers' blurb (p. 2). The fourth reader includes rules on elocution (a reminder of the continuing oral nature of reading instruction), words to be spelled and defined, and comprehension questions.

18. SANDERS, CHARLES W. *Sanders' Series: The School Reader: Third Book*. 1841; New York: Mark H. Newman & Co., 1848.

The transformation in readers is evident from the questions included by Sanders after his selections. His series included material of interest to children, but it still presupposed that they had gone through the spelling book.

19. COBB, LYMAN. *Cobb's Spelling Book, Being a Just Standard for Pronouncing the English Language*, rev. ed. Newark, NJ: Benjamin Olds & Son, 1847.

THE MOSCHETO.

1. THE moscheto is a small insect that is bred in water.
2. The moscheto is a species of gnat that abounds in marshes and low lands, and whose sting is peculiarly painful and vexatious.

THE PORCUPINE.

1. THE crested porcupine has a body about two feet in length, four toes on each of the fore feet, and five on each of the hinder feet, a crested head, a short tail, and the upper lip divided like that of the hare.
2. The body is covered with prickles, which are very sharp, and some of them nine or ten inches long; these he can erect at pleasure.
3. When attacked, he rolls his body into a round form, in which position the prickles are presented in every direction to the enemy.
4. This species is a native of Africa and Asia.

THE APE.

1. THE ape is an animal, found in the torrid zone of both continents, of a great variety of species.

Catalog No. 21

20. COBB, LYMAN. *Cobb's Juvenile Reader No. 2*. Oxford, NY: Chapman & Flagler, 1832.

Cobb's *Juvenile Reader* series, written by the schoolmaster Lyman Cobb of New York state, also expected the child to finish the speller before beginning the readers. Cobb's stories have titles like "The Good Children," "The Diligent Scholar," and "The Pet Lamb."

21. COBB, LYMAN. *Cobb's Juvenile Reader No. 3*. Baltimore: Joseph Jewett, 1831.

The reader includes factual materials, such as short accounts of chocolate, opium, printing and the porcupine.

22. COBB, LYMAN. *Cobb's New Juvenile Reader No. 1*. Pulaski, NY: Robinson, Wright, & Co., 1844.

The difference between the Cobb readers of 1832 and 1844 is instructive. The second reader of the old series had a succession of stories, but no teaching apparatus, such as questions. In contrast, the first *New Juvenile Reader* has lists of the words to be found in the following story (to be decoded by using the alphabet/spelling method), their definitions, and some factual questions. The questions about Jane Bruce ask, "What is this story about?...What has she which hangs in pretty curls?" (p. 45)

23. GRIFFIN, SARAH L. *Introduction to the Southern Second Class Reader: Familiar Tales for Children*. New York: Pratt, Woodford, 1849.

Griffin was author of the *Southern Class Readers*. The series of readers was unusual in that it was designed expressly for the southern market and written by a woman, at a time when the authorship of textbooks was overwhelmingly a male stronghold. (Mr. M.M. Mason, principal of an academy, served as her coauthor for the first reader.)

This volume, *Familiar Tales for Children*, was intended as supplementary reading rather than as a part of the series itself. Girls are the protagonists more often than boys in these moral tales, in which slipshoddiness of any kind leads to horrible results. The frontispiece appropriately depicts a graveyard.

Change in the Role of the Speller

The reforms eventually resulted in changing the role played by spelling books. They gradually lost their status as the text that introduced children to reading. The author David Tower expressed the change succinctly in 1845:

> The Spelling Book was formerly the only text-book used in teaching a child to read. Its place, in that respect, is now supplied by Primers and Reading Books, expressly adapted to that end, and better suited to the purpose. The Spelling Book now falls into its appropriate sphere of giving the learner the orthography and orthoepy [pronunciation] of the language. (p. 7)

24. TOWER, DAVID B. *The Gradual Speller and Complete Enunciator.* Boston: Sanborn, Carter, Bazin & Co., 1845.

Experiments in Methodology

By the 1830s not only spelling books but the alphabet/spelling method itself came under severe criticism. While some of the textbook authors influenced by Pestolozzi's emphasis on meaning were altering the content of their books, others were open to a change in methodology as well.

One group became interested in presenting words as wholes. Arguing that children learned from whole to part (not from part to whole, an inherent feature of the alphabet method), they began to experiment with procedures that introduced whole words with pictures and concrete experiences. (See "word methods," below.)

Yet another group had become interested in the scientific analysis of the English language in terms of the relationship between phonemes and letters. They recognized the potential this analysis had in teaching reading and sought a rational approach that would lead the learner, step by step, to a mastery of reading. This last group began to experiment with various "phonic" approaches. (See "phonic approaches," p. 19.)

While school readers have been grouped under these general categories, it should be borne in mind that they are not always mutually exclusive: authors of reading series could and did hedge their bets by invoking a variety of methods.

Word Methods

In the word method, words are learned as wholes, by sight. Children are asked to link a printed word to a word already in their speaking vocabulary. There is no sounding and blending: instant recognition is the goal.

How the word method was used in practice changed over time. Initially it was used to introduce the child to his or her first reading, but the authors

then quickly moved back to the traditional alphabet approach or used sight words as the basis for phonic generalizations (Word Method I: Word to Letter). Later the word method was used to introduce children directly to reading, with phonic skills taking a back seat (Word Method II: Words to Reading).

Word Method I: Word to Letter

The word method began in reaction to the alphabetic method. The origins of the word method are in dispute, but Samuel Worcester suggested it in his 1826 primer, and it was in use in readers as least as early as 1840, when Josiah Bumstead used it in a book called *My Little Primer*. John Russell Webb also used it in his primer called *The New Word Method* (1846).

In this early phase of the word method, it was used to introduce children to their first reading, in primers. However, instruction soon reverted to traditional approaches, telling children to spell out words placed before a story prior to reading them in the story.

25. SWINTON'S WORD PRIMER. New York: Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, [1883]. [Missing title page]

Swinton's Word Primer is a case in point. The first month of the school year was to be spent in learning at sight useful words such as parts of the head or kinds of fruit, but in the second month children were asked to pronounce and spell words on the basis of their phonic similarity. This "word primer" is really the old spelling book in a new dress.

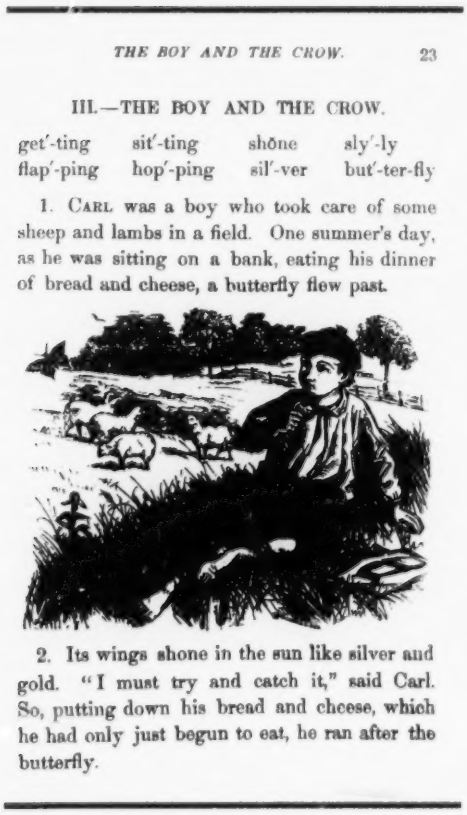
Phonic Approaches

Also in reaction to the alphabet method, several different types of "phonic" readers emerged before and after the Civil War. They all replaced pronouncing the *name* of the letter by pronouncing its *sound*. They can be classified broadly into four main categories: (a) Phonic/spelling approach; (b) reformed, augmented, or invented alphabets; (c) diacritical markings on the traditional alphabet; (d) synthetic phonics approaches. They all abandoned the syllabary, and all but the

phonic/spelling approach abandoned the procedure of spelling out words during oral and silent reading for decoding purposes. However, they all retained the syllable as a crucial unit of instruction.

Basic to all these approaches was the conviction that the vast majority of words could be decoded if children were taught the sounds represented by letters and how to sound and blend those sounds in order to identify words. For the many unpredictabilities of English pronunciation, either of two remedies was used: indicating by diacritical markings how a particular letter should be pronounced (Approaches A, C and D) or changing the alphabet itself (Approach B).

A. Phonic/Spelling Approach



THE BOY AND THE CROW. 23

III.—THE BOY AND THE CROW.

get'-ting sit'-ting shōne sly'-ly
flap'-ping hop'-ping sil'-ver but'-ter-fly

1. CARL was a boy who took care of some sheep and lambs in a field. One summer's day, as he was sitting on a bank, eating his dinner of bread and cheese, a butterfly flew past.

2. Its wings shone in the sun like silver and gold. "I must try and catch it," said Carl. So, putting down his bread and cheese, which he had only just begun to eat, he ran after the butterfly.

Catalog No. 27

Texts based on these principles used both the names of the alphabetical letters and their sounds. (They were eventually replaced by the synthetic phonics programs that appeared in the latter part of the 19th century.) They stressed clear and "correct" enunciation of words, with a special emphasis on vowel sounds. In them, children were given extensive practice on how individual letters were to be pronounced. Many authors used diacritical markings when presenting unfamiliar words, usually before the story in which the words appeared. They also, in a look back at the alphabet method, divided words into syllables to aid children in pronouncing them.

Correct enunciation is an important part of all the readers, but particularly so in the advanced ones. The fifth reader was usually the "speaker" or "rhetoric"—the elocutionary reader. G.S. Hillard's *Third Primary Reader* begins with exercises in enunciation.

26. HILLARD, G.S. *The Third Primary Reader*. Boston: Brewer and Tileston, 1858.

In Hillard's third reader, the selections deal with children's adventures. The poem "Casablanca"—"The boy stood on the burning deck, /Whence all but him had fled"—was a great favorite for declamation on evenings when parents were invited to the school to see their children perform (p. 85).

27. HILLARD, G.S., and L.J. CAMPBELL. *The Franklin Third Reader*. New York: Taintor Brothers, Merrill & Co., 1878.

Twenty years later, Hillard was still writing readers. According to the authors, the stories were a mixture of "entertaining narratives" and "valuable information" (p. iv). Children were to pronounce the words before the story and those defined after the story. In "The Boy and the Crow," Carl's cheese is stolen by the crow while he is chasing a butterfly: it is a lesson against taking what is not yours (p. 23).

B. Reformed, Augmented or Invented Alphabets

A second category of phonic readers was written in reformed or augmented alphabets. Several 19th-century educators believed that the only logical and scientific way to begin instruction to reading was with an alphabet that had a one-to-one letter-sound correspondence. They therefore set out to devise one.

28. REGENTS OF THE DESERET UNIVERSITY. *The Deseret Second Book*. n.p., 1868.

The Deseret series of readers (1868) represents a most unusual experiment in this direction. There are several explanations for the introduction of the 36-character Deseret alphabet to Utah in 1852. The Mormons wanted to make it simpler for children to learn to read and spell; they wished to address the needs of converts converging on Salt Lake City from many different countries; and Brigham Young, the Mormon leader, was reportedly a terrible speller.

Although the Deseret alphabet was later taught in the Utah public schools, scholars have attributed its subsequent failure to several factors: its cost; the

Catalog No. 28

confusion children experienced in learning two systems; and the death of two of its principal proponents, George D. Watt (who had designed many of the characters for the alphabet) and Brigham Young himself. Others cite the unattractive look of the alphabet; its lack of popular support; competition from materials printed in the conventional alphabet; and above all, the arrival of the railroad in 1869, which ended the isolation of the Mormons.

Page 5 reads as follows, transliterated into the traditional orthography:

Lesson II. The Pen.

We rit with a pen. The pen iz ov grat yioos.

We kan mak non owr thawts, bi th yioos ov the pen.

Hwen we wish too tawk with our frendz hoo liv far awa, we ma sit at hom, and tawk with them bi menz ov the pen, and tel them al we wish them to no. Hwen we hav lurnd to red, we shud also lurn to rit.

C. Diacritical Markings on the Traditional Alphabet

This category represents the belief by some educators that reforming the alphabet was unnecessary if diacritical marks were used in the child's text to make the pronunciation of any particular letter unambiguous. One of these educators was Edward G. Ward, formerly a superintendent of schools in Brooklyn, New York. He produced a popular set of readers at the turn of the 20th century that made extensive use of these marks.

22

29. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading*. Boston: Silver, Burdett, & Co., 1900.

Ward describes his approach in this teacher's manual. It is an early example of a new genre: teacher's manuals printed separately from the readers.

30. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading. Primer.* Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1894.

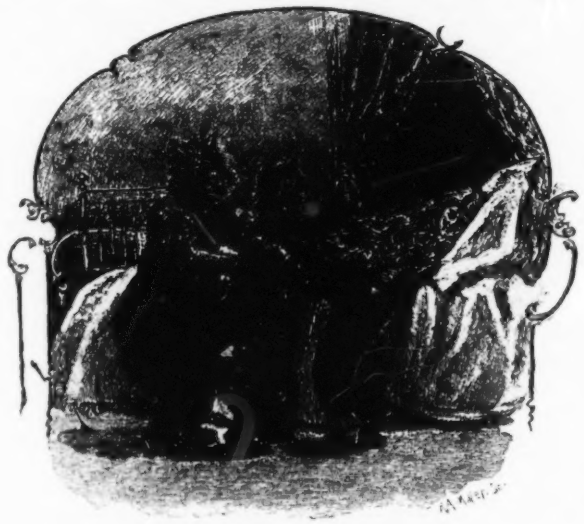
Ward's primer, in this phonics text, begins with instruction by the word method. The second part of the primer combines the two approaches. His stories are realistic, with child protagonists.

31. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading. Additional Primer* by Mary A. Ward and Madalene D. Barnum. Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1906.

Apparently the primer alone proved inadequate, because Ward later published this additional primer.

32. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading. First Reader.* Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1899.

33. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading. Second Reader.* Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1896.



33 At that, Little Silver-Hâir a wōkė. When she saw the thrēe bêars, she sat up in bed. She stârėd at them, and they at her.

Catalog No. 33

Nursery stories begin to appear in this reader, along with speaking animals: the tale of "Little Silver-Hair" and the three bears is still recognizable!

34. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading. Additional Second Reader,* by Mary A. Ward, rev. and enlarg. ed. 1913; Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1916.

An additional second reader published 17 years later incorporated the nursery stories, fables, and fairy tales that were becoming very popular in the first two decades of the 20th century.

35. WARD, EDWARD G. *The Rational Method in Reading. Third Reader.* Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1899.

D. Synthetic Phonics Approaches

Authors falling within this last category advocated synthetic phonics. Although diacritical markings were often used to introduce new words before the story began, synthetic phonics approaches differed from the diacritical marking approach in that they did not mark up the text of a story itself. Synthetic phonics texts that began to appear at the end of the 19th century were similar to those of the earlier phonic/spelling approach. They differed from them in their overt instruction in sounding and blending.

The readers in this category contain the set sequence that was in place by the end of the 19th century for teaching beginning reading. The sequence was: (a) teach the letter names and their sounds, usually with pictures and/or a teacher-contrived "sound experience"; (b) sound out and blend words as soon as a few letter-sounds are learned; and (c) orally read sentences and stories containing words with the letter sounds learned. (These would be termed "decodable" texts today.) The readers listed below all make use of the procedure.

36. MONROE, LEWIS B. *The Chart-Primer, or First Steps in Reading*. Philadelphia: Cowperthwait & Co., 1877.

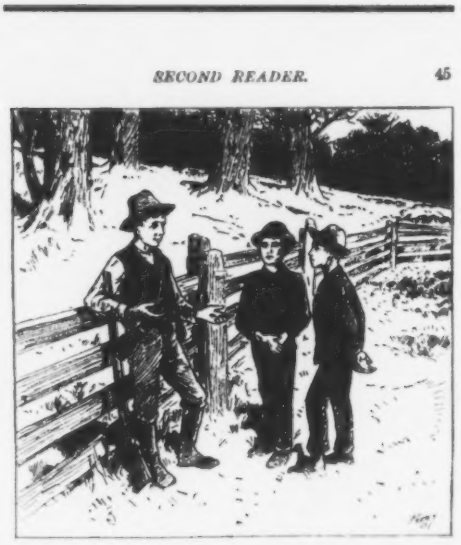
Monroe was the author of a major series of readers in the last quarter of the 19th century. In his phonic approach, what he calls "Build up the Word" (p. 8), we would call "sounding out."

37. MONROE, LEWIS B. *First Steps in Spelling*. Philadelphia: Cowperthwait & Co., 1874.

The color on this copy is provided by the pupil, not the publisher! (pp. 8-9)

The shift in methodology in favor of phonics affected even the best known of

the 19th-century series, the McGuffey Readers. In response to slipping sales, in 1879 its publishers put out a radically revised version of the series, adding diacritical markings to preparatory lists of words. One of the many illustrators for this series was the artist Henry Farny (1847–1916), better known in his time for his portraits of Indians and the West.


SECOND READER. 45

5. Thus, they at once began to quarrel about the nut.

6. As they could not agree whose it should be, they called an older boy, and asked him.

7. The older boy said, "I will settle this quarrel."

8. He took the nut, and broke the shell. He then took out the kernel,

Catalog No. 38

38. MCGUFFEY'S SECOND ECLECTIC READER, rev. ed. New York: American Book Company, 1879. (Modern reproduction)

Farny's signature is clearly visible at the bottom right hand corner in his illustration for "The Quarrel," a story in the second reader about two boys who argue about which of them should get a large nut they have found. As always, there is a moral to the story: the older arbitrator breaks the nutshell, gives a half shell to each boy, but keeps the kernel for himself as his reward for settling the quarrel. "'This is the way,' said he, laughing, 'in which quarrels are very apt to end'"(p. 46). The moral: don't go to law!

39. MCGUFFEY'S THIRD ECLECTIC READER, rev. ed. New York: American Book Company, 1879. (Modern reproduction)

The third reader, like the second, deals only with reality, not fantasy, and mostly with children. It includes a few selections on nature, such as the humming bird.

40. MCGUFFEY'S FOURTH ECLECTIC READER, rev. ed. New York: American Book Company, 1879. (Modern reproduction)

The fourth reader has a greater number of poems and smaller print than the third, but the moral thrust is the same. Its stories include the old favorites

Catalog No. 41

"Meddlesome Mattie" and "Waste Not, Want Not." The tale of "Susie's Composition" is one of writer's block: Susie is in tears because she can't write a composition. Her mother's solution is to tell her to write about what she can see from her window. The resultant piece is a success: "it is easy enough to write if you have anything interesting to write about." The questions include "Why was Susie so troubled?" and "Can you give her composition a proper subject [title]?" (p. 108).

41. POLLARD, REBECCA S. *Pollard's Synthetic Speller*. Chicago: Western Publishing House, 1894.

Rebecca Pollard initially published her Synthetic series herself, but it was soon taken up by a commercial publisher. She taught all the sounds of the letters before moving children into text. Her pronunciation chart associated letters with sounds that had no relation to a word: the pronunciation of *ch/tch* is inspired by a picture of a train ("*ch, ch, ch*"); an African-American woman who is hard of hearing says "*eh*?" (short *e*) (pp. 9–10). Pollard's approach did not endear her to progressives: Edmund Burke Huey (see below) attacked it as "arrogantly" phonic and "intensely artificial."

42. CYR, ELLEN M. *The Children's First Reader*. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1898.

Ellen Cyr also used a synthetic phonics approach, marking the new words diacritically before each story. She was the first woman to have a major series marketed under her own name: the *Children's Readers* were soon retitled the *Cyr Readers*. She prided herself on moving the child slowly but surely through the material. Although her stories featured more girls than boys, traditional gender roles are much in evidence. Rural living is idealized over

the city: Two children from a city orphanage ("Home") are so happy on the farm of their hosts that the kindly farmer and his wife adopt them (p. 76). Revised editions of her series appeared for the next quarter century.

43. CYR, ELLEN M. *The Children's Second Reader*. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1895.

44. CYR, ELLEN M. *The Children's Third Reader*. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1902.

On the cover, the book is now titled *Cyr's Third Reader*.

Readers for Catholic Schools

By the 1870s, a large Catholic school system was in competition in many cities with the public school system, attracting the children of Catholic parents (particularly of Irish and Italian origin) who could afford their modest fees. At one point, it was said that one child in every seven attended a Catholic school. Readers designed for this audience differed in content, but not methodology, from the mainstream texts. They were usually authored anonymously, with only a reference to the author's particular order.

45. A MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS. *The Metropolitan Fourth Reader: Carefully Arranged, In Prose And Verse*...New and rev. ed. New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1873.

The author of the Metropolitan Readers criticized rival series for being "made expressly for mixed schools where Protestant and Catholic, Jew and pagan, may read out of the same book, without discovering that there is such a thing as religion in the world" (p. 5)—a charge that underestimated the underlying monotheistic tone of much public school material.

Here a lesson on extreme unction is followed by a poem in which a mother is using birds, as she talks to her son, as metaphors for Christian characteristics (p. 209). It ends with the swan and his swansong:

> "Live so, my love, that when death shall come,
> Swan-like and sweet, it may waft thee home."

Word Method II: Words to Reading

For a variety of reasons, the word method gained new popularity in the 1880s. The ascendancy of the method signaled a radical change in American reading instruction. Earlier methods had not merely gone from part to whole, from the letter to the word; they had reached the word via the intermediary step of the syllable. Both spelling book authors and authors of phonics texts had divided words into syllables (thereby indicating vowel values) by spaces or hyphens. It had been taken for granted that this was important and helpful to children's ability to decode unfamiliar words. But in the new manifestation of the word method, this would no longer be the case: In beginning reading instruction, at least, vowel sounds would take a back seat.

One factor influencing the popularity of the word method was the object method. Originally associated with Pestalozzi, the object method was popularized in the U.S. by Edward Austin Sheldon, who in 1862 became principal of the Oswego State Normal and Training school, New York, the first urban teacher training school in the U.S. His much-sought-after student teachers spread it throughout the country. The approach began with familiar objects, such as a cap, and taught words as signs of these objects.

Progressive Education

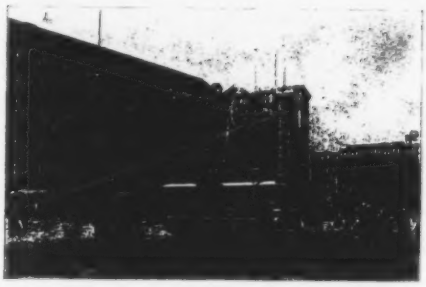
Another factor influencing the popularity of the word method was the growth of progressive education. "Progressive education," the most important educational movement of the late 19th and early 20th century, is associated with the names of Col. Francis Parker and John Dewey. Progressive educators believed that play was the child's work and that learning should proceed from the child's own interests.

The movement's ideology was inherently at odds with the structured approach implicit in any reading series. Ideally, children should learn to read from their own stories, which they had dictated or written themselves. In a school totally committed to progressive education, a basal reading series would have no part to play. Nonetheless, the movement's stress on ease and pleasure in learning would have important consequences for the whole-word approach, which was believed to incorporate both, in contrast to the effort involved in phonics learning.

Because of the freedom of choice that the word method offered—unlike phonic approaches, there needed to be no vocabulary restraints dictated by trying to match the text to the sounds of the letters taught up to a given point—the word method rapidly gained new popularity among those who considered themselves "progressive." According to Edmund Burke Huey, the word method "was very little used in America until 1870, when progressive teachers began using it in various parts of the country" (p. 272).

46. SHELDON, E.A. *The Fifth Reader.* New York: Scribner, Armstrong, & Co., 1875.

Sheldon was influential in popularizing Pestalozzi's object method. But by the time the child had reached the fifth reader, methodology was not at issue: content was all. For the fifth reader, he claimed, "We have selected from the most celebrated authors in French, German, English, and American Literature" (v). The text includes excerpts from authors ranging from Hans Christian Andersen to Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and Victor Hugo. Poets include Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Shelley—but not Shakespeare.



city street must ground

city street must ground

This is a street in a city.
Do you live in a city?
See the horses and the cars.
You must look out for the cars.
Do boys play in the street?
Yes, but there is not much room to play.
The playground is the best place to play.

I live in a big city.

120

Catalog No. 47

47. KIRK, MAY. *The Baldwin Primer.* New York: American Book Company, 1899.

"In a primer the most familiar objects should form the basis of the lessons" (p. 4). Words are presented in both type and script, and the series is an early user of full color in many illustrations.

48. BALDWIN, JAMES. *School Reading by Grades: First Year.* New York: American Book Company, 1897.

"The earlier lessons in this book relate to objects which are familiar to every child."

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III.

LITERATURE FIRST: SENTENCE AND STORY METHODS (1883–1925)

Sentence and Story Methods

By the 1880s, educators such as Colonel Francis W. Parker and George L. Farnham had become concerned, as earlier educators had been, about emphasizing understanding in beginning reading instruction. They were convinced that this could only occur through procedures that made use of sentential text in silent reading activities from the very first moment reading instruction was initiated. Reading was thought-getting, said Parker in his *Talks to Teachers* (1883). In response to this and to George Farnham's *The Sentence Method of Reading* (1895), sentence method and story method readers began to appear. By the early 1900s these instructional tools were growing in popularity in American schools.

In terms of methodology, the crucial difference between the sentence method and story method was in the initial presentation of sentential text. In the story method the teachers began instruction by telling the story, i.e., reading the complete text to the children as it appeared in the reader. This story, often a rhyme or fairy tale with repetitive refrains, was to be memorized by the children prior to the introduction of the printed text.

In the sentence method, the teacher presented the story one sentence at a time through questioning and the use of illustrations. Each sentence was written on the blackboard or a prepared chart, with children reading each as it was presented. In a sense, the child "discovered" his/her way through the text. Story method readers used this same approach, but only after the entire text had been read to the class and fully committed to memory through dramatization and action response activities.

The Literature Movement

Another important influence on textbook content was Charles W. Eliot, the president of Harvard University, who in the early 1890s attacked contemporary readers for their lack of literary merit. He called for their removal from the classroom: "It would be well for the advancement of the whole public school system if every reader were hereafter to be absolutely excluded from the school. I object to them because they are not real literature; they are but scraps of literature..." (quoted in Smith, 1965, p. 120). His campaign significantly influenced the content of readers, which now turned to fables, myths, and fairy stories for the early grades, and to more advanced literature for the later ones.

The readers that appear below are either sentence or story method in their approach, although elements of both methodologies are found in all of them. The presence of "child-literature" is also very marked.

49. CALMERTON, GAIL, and WILLIAM H. WHEELER. *Wheeler's Graded Readers: A First Reader*. Chicago: W.H. Wheeler & Co, 1901.

This sentence-method reader states that "This little book... is to be read by the children and not to them by the teacher." Some of the authors' comments will sound familiar to contemporary ears: "A child does not learn to speak a word by hearing it once, and he will not learn to recognize the printed form of a word by seeing it once" (p. 3).

50. ARNOLD, SARAH LOUISE. *The Arnold Primer* New York: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1901.

Arnold also demonstrates the sentence approach. A picture (a red apple) is

THE ARNOLD PRIMER. 11

This is an apple.
Do you see the apple?
The apple is red.
See the red apple.
Dot, see the red apple.
Dan, see the apple.

Apple apple A a See see S s

Catalog No. 50

presented to the class for discussion, and is then followed by a printed statement on the blackboard: "This is a red apple." Sentences are then examined by words (apple, see), which in turn are examined by letters (*a*, *s*). The relationship between the sentence and word approaches is clear from Arnold's introduction, which teachers were instructed to read aloud to the children: "Do you wish to read every story that is in this little book? Do you want to know every word in it, so that when you find the word in papa's newspaper or in mamma's library book, you will know its face, just as well as you know the faces of your little playmates? If you try, you can do this" (p. 5).

51. ARNOLD, SARAH LOUISE, ELIZABETH C. BONNEY, and E.F. SOUTHWORTH. *The See and Say Series: Book One*. Syracuse, NY: Iroquois Publishing Co., 1920.

The sentence approach, however, could be a prelude to a phonics one. Arnold calls the first book of her coauthored See and Say series "A Picture Book Teaching the Letters and Their Sounds with Lessons in Word Building" (subtitle).

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

This is the house that Jack built.

This is the malt
That lay in the house
that Jack built.

This is the rat,
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the cat,
That killed the rat,
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

34

Catalog No. 52

52. NORTON, CHARLES ELIOT, ed. *The Heart of Oak Books: First Book*. rev. ed. Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1902.

Norton was convinced that selection of content, not methodology, was the primary solution in teaching beginning reading. The aim of the Heart of Oak series was to nourish "the growing intelligence of the child... with selected portions of the best literature" (p. vi). The first book was "for reading to the child as well as for reading by him" (p. ix)—a story approach. "The House that Jack Built" was an early selection (pp. 34–35).

53. THE HEATH READERS: SECOND READER. Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1903.

The *Heath Readers* by the same publisher had the more modest aim of offering easy, interesting, and carefully graded reading material, the "best and most suggestive pictures," and verses for memorization known as "memory gems." One is by Henry W. Longfellow (p. 13):

Memory Gem

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruins,
And moulder in dust away.

54. HUEY, EDMUND BURKE. *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*. 1908; reprint Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1968.

In 1908 Huey published his enormously influential *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*. As much as any other work, it tilted reading pedagogy away from the synthetic phonics approaches used by so many of the basal readers of the 1870s and 1880s. He advocated, as progressives consistently had done, moving from whole to part, and therefore from sentences to words.

55. BURCHILL, GEORGINE, WILLIAM L. ETTINGER, and EDGAR DUBS SHIMER. *The Progressive Road to Reading: Book One*. New York: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1909.

56. BURCHILL, GEORGINE, WILLIAM L. ETTINGER, and EDGAR DUBS SHIMER. *Plan of Work [Teacher's Guide] for the Progressive Road to Reading*. New York: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1910.

The Progressive Road series invoked the progressive educational movement in its title while using the "classics of childhood" as its texts. The first reader has nursery stories with repetitive refrains such as "Then I will make it myself, said the Hen." At first glance the reader appears to be, methodologically, a perfect example of the story method.

But the retention of so many monosyllables in the story (she is not the *little*

red hen), reminiscent of the old spellers, should give us a hint: and indeed information in the teacher's guide reveals a more complex pedagogy. Teachers were told how to drill children first on the recognition of words (by position, by comparison); then, once these were learned as sight words, the guide introduced "phonetics." One section outlines instruction in what we would call today "onset and rime"—consonant substitution.

57. BALDWIN, JAMES, and IDA C. BENDER. *Reading With Expression: First Reader*. New York: American Book Company, 1911.

The authors claim that "All the well-proved methods...are embodied in this First Reader" (p. 3), but its look-and-say element predominates. The series is an early user of full color in many of its illustrations.

58. COE, IDA, and ALICE J. CHRISTIE. *Story Hour Readers: Book Two*. New York: American Book Company, 1914.

The methodology of this series is implied in its title. Coauthored by an assistant principal and a teacher of a New York City public school, this second reader has nursery stories such as "The Three Bears" and the "Babes in the Wood"— "And the poor little things/They lay down and died"—(p.102), and the fairy tale, "Prince Roland." This reader offers an early example of the use of colored illustrations; its palette is limited.

59. BRYCE, CATHERINE T., and FRANK E. SPAULDING. *Aldine Readers: Book One*, rev. ed. 1906; New York: Newsome & Co., 1916.

"The content of this book," claim the coauthors Catherine Bryce and Frank Spaulding, both of Yale University, "is the content of the happy life of childhood. Here are bees, butterflies, and grasshoppers..." (p. 3). The story method undergirds this work, but it is one of the first readers to feature a "vocabulary" of words at the end of the book—to be learned as sight words. When compared with the Progressive Road series of only seven years earlier, it can be seen that the link between syllables and presumed difficulty has been severed: There are no longer any vocabulary restrictions. The idealization of country life is as strong as ever.

60. MALTBY, ETHEL H., and SIDNEY G. FIRMAN. *The Winston Companion Readers: Primer*. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1922.

There is not a child to be seen in this "companion" primer. All the stories feature talking animals. The stories are rhythmic and repetitive. (Today we would call them "predictable.") The primer is an example of the story approach.

The squirrel said,
"Yes, I will help you.
I will cut some wood."

So Piggy Wig and the squirrel cut the wood.
Then they made a little house.

11

Catalog No. 60

61. FIRMAN, SIDNEY G., and ETHEL H. MALTBY. *The Winston Readers: Primer Manual*. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1924.

In the instructions in the manual for the primer, phonics lessons lag well behind the words in the stories. The directions to teachers provide an early example of a whole word to phonics approach still in use in many basal reading series today. Flash cards were an important feature of the procedure. The directions accompanying the story of the "Little Red Hen" (one of the most frequently used stories of the period) instruct the teacher to teach the sound *p* from pig, and to "Pronounce p-i-g slowly, giving the pure sound of *p* and not the *pu* sound" (p. 6A).

IV.

THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS INTO READING (1914–1940)

While reading series continued to be published that followed the story and sentence methods, there is a discernible switch to those that not only relied on the word method, but introduced more rigorous vocabulary control. One of the reasons was the new influence of scientific research into reading and the importance given to quantification.

Edward Lee Thorndike, Arthur Gates, and William S. Gray

In 1914, Edward Lee Thorndike of Teachers College, Columbia University, published his reading scale. Within the next few years, he wrote other articles on the psychology and measurement of reading, and his influence on the new professional field of reading became enormous. His measurement movement fostered new research into reading, undertaken by educational psychologists. Thorndike himself authored a vocabulary for teachers, *The Teacher's Word Book* (1921), which his younger colleague Arthur Gates drew upon for his own *A Reading Vocabulary for the Primary Grades* (1926). The latter was used heavily by publishers as they chose which words to include in their early readers.

But although Gates became coauthor of Macmillan's The Work-Play Books in 1930, it was William S. Gray of the University of Chicago who proved to be the key link between reading research and reading pedagogy: He epitomized the reading researcher turned basal author. Between 1909 and 1929, Gray published 57 articles, reviews, tests, and monographs related to reading. In 1919, in the *Eighteenth Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education, Gray published an article on the "Principles of Method in

Teaching Reading, as Derived from Scientific Investigation." In 1930 he became the coauthor of Scott, Foresman's reading series.

The Shift to Silent Reading

The shift toward the silent reading of literature and away from elocutionary texts had already begun in the late 19th century. But the importance of silent reading was reinforced by the experimental evidence of the early studies, which found that children understood more easily when they read silently than orally. By the 1920s, educators were drawing on this evidence to support the issuance of "silent" readers.

62. **LEWIS, WILLIAM D., and ALBERT LINDSAY ROWLAND. *The Silent Readers: Fourth Reader*. Philadelphia: The John C.Winston Company, 1920.**

In this series, the authors invoked the studies of "Gray, Starch, Judd, Courtis, Monroe, Kelly, and many others" to support the importance of silent reading. They begin the book by instructing their young readers: "The book which you are now beginning has been specially prepared for you to read to yourselves silently, because that is the way you will have to read most often when you grow up. You must even try not to move your lips as you read" (p. 1). The content, however, was entirely literary, ranging from fairy stories to adventure tales.

The New Realism, 1930 on

From about 1930 on, basal readers would show the influence of both progressive education and the scientific measurement movement. The former encouraged a new realism (fairy tales were out; stories of children at home and play were in), and the latter promoted what was called "a scientifically controlled vocabulary."

One example of this switch to realism is the *Children's Own Readers*.

63. **PENNELL, MARY E., and ALICE M. CUSACK. *The Children's Own Readers. Book One*. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1929.**

The authors had both been associated with schools in Kansas City, Missouri, as

supervisors—Pennell as an assistant superintendent and Cusack as a director of kindergarten and the primary grades. The stories about family outings are all completely realistic: no talking animals here. The method is the word method, with little vocabulary control.

Professional Publications in Reading

A new feature of the 1930s was the publication of books addressed to teachers of reading, as reading began to define itself as a separate professional field. Four of these follow.

64. YOAKAM, GERALD A. *The Improvement of the Assignment*. New York: Macmillan, 1933.

One of the pioneers in reading education, Gerald A. Yoakam focused his attention in this text on an aspect of teaching that "has never been adequately treated"—the assignment.

65. BETTS, EMMETT A. *The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1936.

The identification and remediation of children with difficulties in reading became a matter of keen concern. Dedicated to misunderstood children, Betts provided a wealth of information with special attention to factors underlying reading difficulties, prevention and correction, reading programs, reading clinics, and sample tests. Betts' book would become a classic.

66. MONROE, MARION, and BERTIE BACHUS. *Remedial Reading*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937.

Based on a character-education experiment conducted in Washington, D.C., schools at the request of the U.S. Congress, Monroe and Bachus focused their attention on the connection between reading and character, providing tips for educators who taught from kindergarten through high school.

67. HILDRETH, GERTRUDE, and JOSEPHINE L. WRIGHT. *Helping Children to Read*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1940.

The authors describe a program at Teachers College that provided "advanced students and teachers-in-training an opportunity to observe and practice remedial reading techniques" during the summer of 1938.

An Example of Textbook Evolution: Dick and Jane

The evolution of readers from the mid 1910s to the 1940s may best be seen in the basal series published by Scott, Foresman. The series was authored first by William H. Elson and Lura Runkel (1914 on), then by Elson and William S. Gray (1930 on), and finally by Gray as the senior author of the revision titled *Basic Readers* (1940–48), which became the mostly widely used reading series for another three decades. One feature of the evolving series was the gradual reduction, as time passed, of the number of words children were expected to learn at each grade level.

In 1930, the publishers introduced a preprimer—the famous "Dick and Jane."

68. ELSON, WILLIAM H., and LURA E. RUNKEL. *Elson-Runkel Primer*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1914.

SPOT'S KITTENS

Spot is my cat.
She is black and white.
Come, Spot, come!
I like Spot.
Spot likes me.

11

Catalog No. 68

The Elson-Runkel series was an early example of a successful Scott, Foresman reading textbook series and in effect the forerunner of their enormously popular series known affectionately as "Dick and Jane." Simple stories about children and talking animals are paramount: "This book is based on the belief that *interesting material* is the most important factor in learning to read," the introduction proclaims (p. 5). For perhaps the first time, a word list is included in the back of the book, and the teacher's guide contains scripted lesson plans that include

telling a story orally, having the children dramatize the story, and developing words and sentences. "Phonetics" consists of linking sounds (the /t/ made by a watch) to letters. Fans of Dick and Jane should note that Spot makes a first appearance here—but as a cat who proceeds to have kittens!

69. ELSON, WILLIAM H., and LURA E. RUNKEL. *Manual for the Elson-Runkel Primer, Presenting a Detailed Method of Procedure for the Teaching of Reading*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1915. [Bound in with the primer]

Elson and Runkel explicitly linked their approach to the scientific studies undertaken by Edmund Burke Huey, John Dewey, and G. Stanley Hall.

70. ELSON, WILLIAM H., and LURA E. RUNKEL. *The Elson Readers, Book Two*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1920.

The content is "chosen from the best to be found in child-literature" (p. 5). It has some family stories, but many more fairy stories, fables, and other anthropomorphic animal stories, along with a few nursery stories such as "Jack and the Beanstalk" (p. 209). The illustrations are in green and brown. The word list at the end itemizes well over 600 words new to the series.

71. ELSON, WILLIAM H., and WILLIAM S. GRAY. *Elson-Gray Basic Readers, Book Two*. 1931; Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1936.

Ten years later, Gray is the coauthor, and there is remarkably little overlap with the content of the earlier second reader. "Jack and the Beanstalk" is one of the few tales to appear in both books (p. 160). The color of the illustrations has a larger palette, and the number of words not taught earlier is now identified with great precision as 471.

72. [ELSON, WILLIAM H., and WILLIAM S. GRAY]. *Elson-Gray Basic Pre-Primer: Dick and Jane*. 1930; Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1936.

This little book has become a collector's item, and deservedly so. Every page

has an illustration in full color. The content of this 68-word book is purely realistic, featuring the white, suburban, middle-class, male-dominant family that would eventually come under heavy criticism, as would the word method itself. We are introduced to all the well-known characters: Dick, Jane, Baby, Little Mew the kitten—and Spot, now in his dog incarnation.

73. *Fun with Dick and Jane: A Commemorative Collection of Stories*. n.p.: Scott, Foresman, n.d.

This commemorative booklet was published as part of Scott Foresman's centennial. It has excerpts from several of the primers and is included in Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman's *Growing Up With Dick and Jane*.

74. CUTOUTS of Dick and Jane. [Scott, Foresman]

As the authors of *Growing Up With Dick and Jane* put it, in their "watercolor

F I N I S

world...night never comes, knees never scrape, parents never yell and the fun never stops."

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